



Take What You Need

—
Soft Words for Hard Days

—
Aundi
Kolber



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Take What You Need: Love Notes for Trying Softer

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Introduction



A Note as We Begin

READER, I AM DELIGHTED YOU'RE HERE. I pray that the pages ahead will serve as a soft spot to land and perhaps even a place to gather courage for the hard, beautiful work of being human.

Maybe you wonder what I mean by *take what you need*. As someone who navigated a traumatic childhood by becoming hyperattuned to what others wanted from me, I once feared making a decision that would displease someone else. This was certainly not the only way I adapted to the trauma I experienced, but I often depended on this strategy to protect me. I wanted to keep the peace at all costs, so instead of *taking what I needed*, I took what I perceived others thought was *okay* for me to need.

"Do you need help?" "Do you want to stay or go?" "Which restaurant sounds best?" Simple questions like these would fill me with anxiety and then a sinking

feeling as I set aside my own preferences in favor of what I thought I *must* say. I unconsciously transferred the terror I felt toward my father to almost everyone else, following the template he'd given me about having needs and a voice. I learned to bypass my body, mind, and spirit very early as a strategy to survive. The shame I carried for even having needs was profound.

In my work as both a therapist and trauma survivor, I've learned how incredibly common it is for us to internalize the belief that we don't have a choice or voice in our own experience. These misperceptions frequently arise in the aftermath of actually having bits of agency ripped away. This is often the cost of unresolved trauma: that even after the event ends, our body still carries the imprint of the pain like a thousand splinters never removed.

It's not only trauma survivors who silence their inner voice. All of us trying to survive in a world filled with pain and destruction sometimes do so as well. How often do we disconnect from our internal compass—the part of us that knows if we're thirsty, hungry, sad, or alone—just to navigate all that comes our way?

Yet I have found that it's possible to reclaim connection to our God-given bodies and needs; in fact, it's foundational to healing and repair. It's more than okay to receive what we need so that we may participate with God in tending the wounds underneath.

I now recognize how essential it is to learn to tune in to the still, small voice inside of us that supports us in discernment. This is where we listen for *God with us*. This is what helps us know how to love our neighbors with integrity and authenticity. And this is where we can attend to the embedded wisdom placed within us.

In my clients, my readers, my loved ones, and myself, I have witnessed this hope-giving truth: As we return agency, affirm dignity, and honor our ability to listen to our God-given needs, we tap into the softness and strength of healing. We create space for repair.

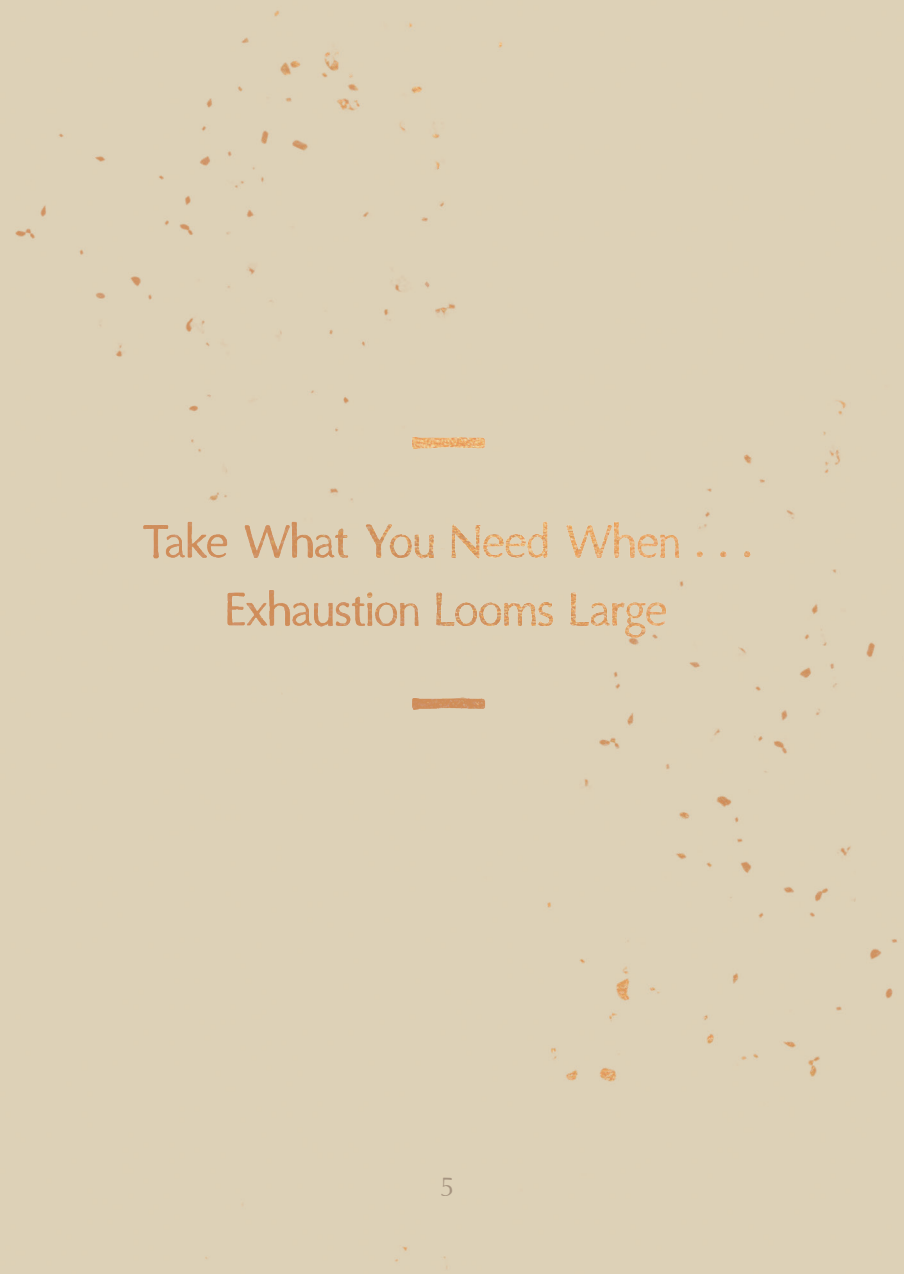
I've come to think of the work I do as both a therapist and author as a sort of hospitality—a way in which I can offer nourishment where there may be fear, pain, loss, or trauma. Many of us are starved for hope, care, attunement, and compassion. Many of us are hungry, but for more than just food. Through the years, I have witnessed and experienced this feeling of lack; I know how it aches to be in need in body, mind, or spirit. So what I can offer is what has been given to me in my own healing. Our God promises to set a table with good things for us (see Psalm 23:5-6), and my desire is to follow His example. I want others to know that not only can we partake of all the sustenance the Lord provides, but we can do so in the way and at the pace that will actually support us. I invite *you*, dear reader, to take what *you* need in the pages ahead.

When the day is long. When you are afraid. When you don't know what to say to someone you love. When you feel alone. When you're questioning everything. When you wonder if God is with you. When the bottom falls out. When you don't know what's next. When you do something courageous. When you don't know how to have hope. When you need to know you can try softer. When you're learning to show up for yourself.

Reader, may these love notes invite you to truly listen to your body, mind, and soul. I hope you will honor your pace, engage what's helpful . . . and take what you need, in the way that you need.

With deep hope,

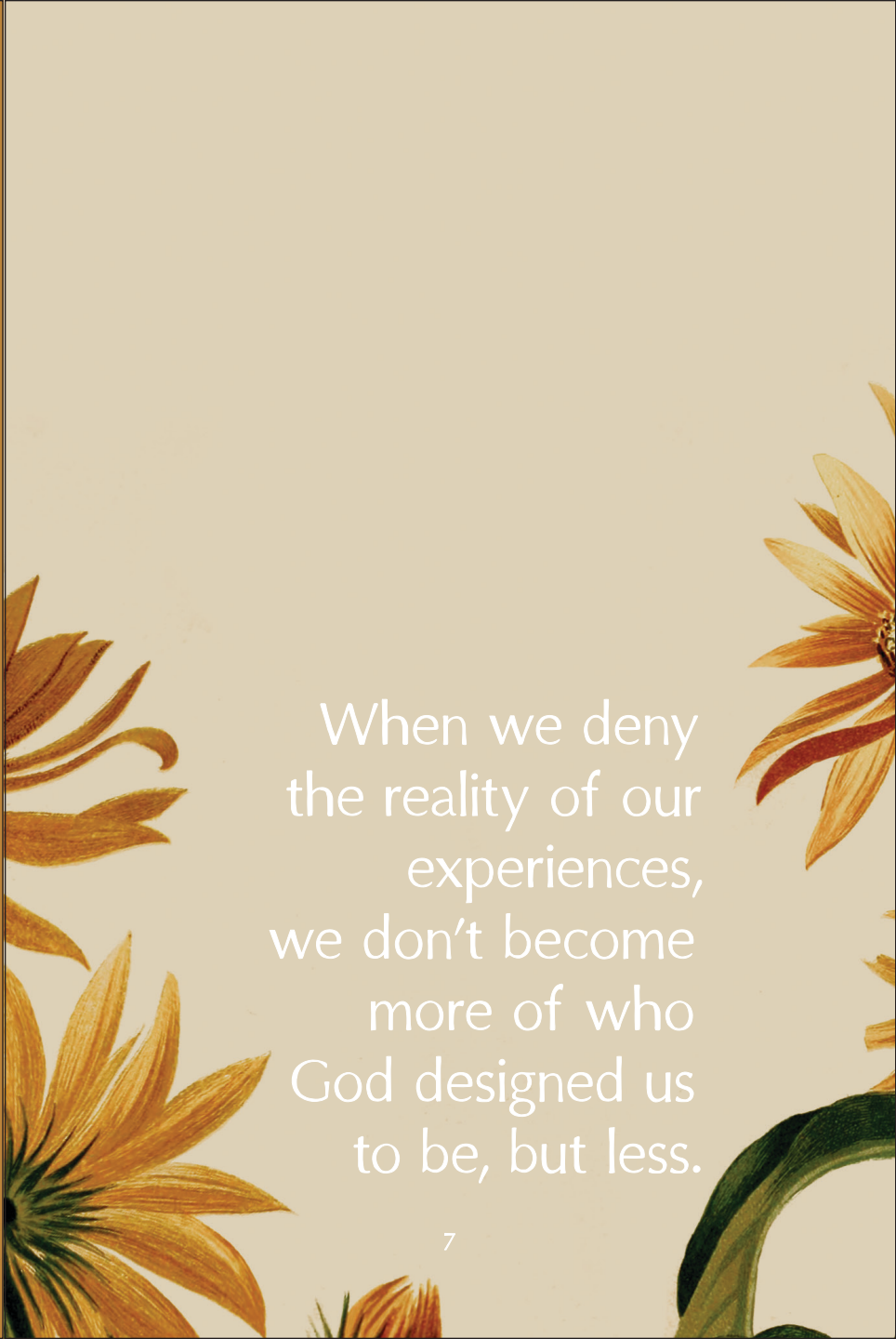
Aundi




Take What You Need When . . .
Exhaustion Looms Large

Perhaps you, too, know what it is like to feel overextended, overburdened, and overwrought, desperately clinging to the idea that if you just push hard enough, if you just try a little harder, you'll be able to regain control, soothe your anxious mind, and achieve some measure of success.

Our world overvalues productivity and others' opinions, so we learn to ignore the messages our bodies are giving us.




When we deny
the reality of our
experiences,
we don't become
more of who
God designed us
to be, but less.

A photograph of a Protea flower with a large, round, white and pinkish head and green leaves, set against a light beige background.

I believe
God's heart
for us is
outrageously
gentle.

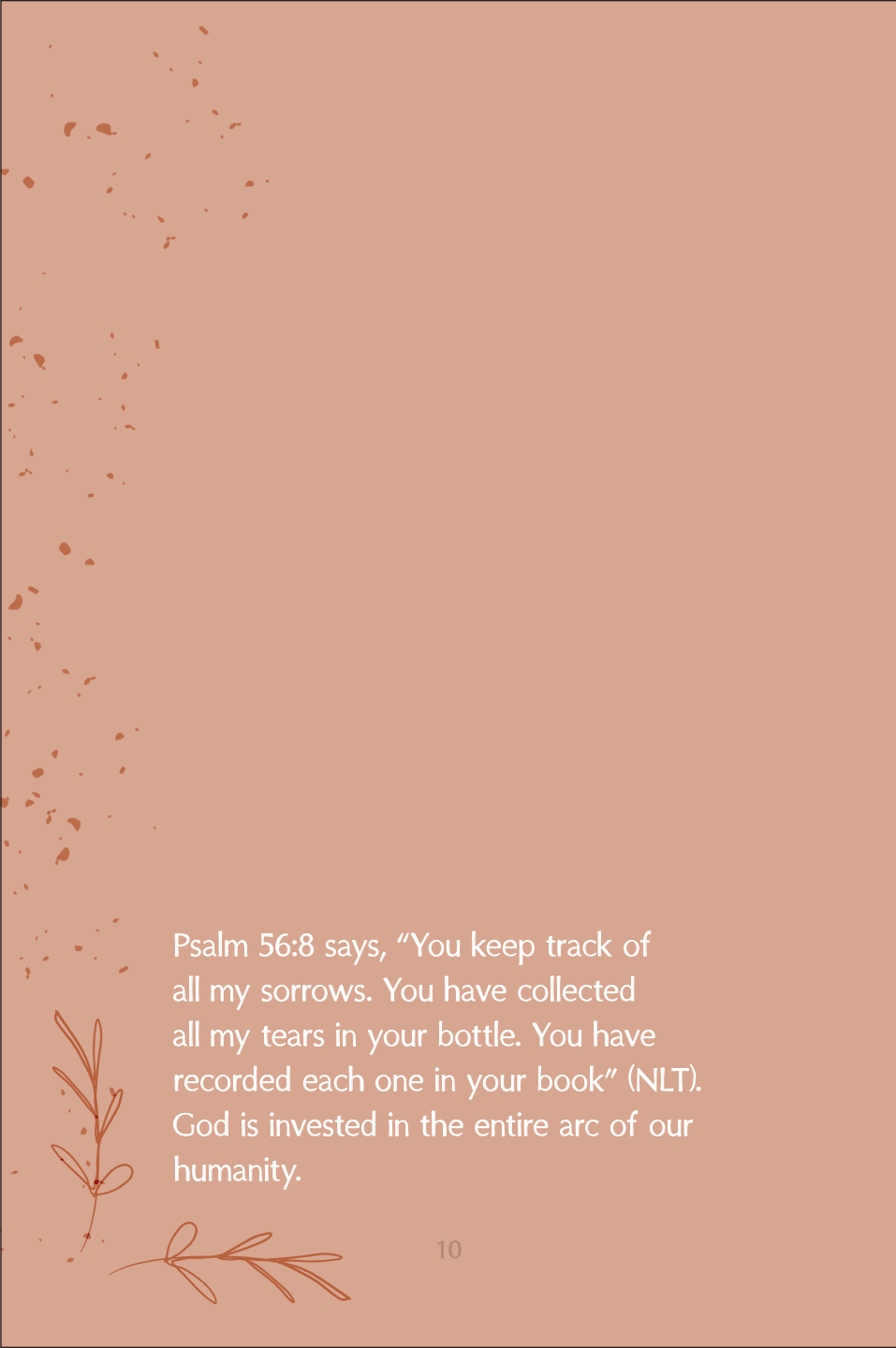
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A simple line drawing of a Protea flower, showing the head and leaves, positioned in the upper right corner of the page.


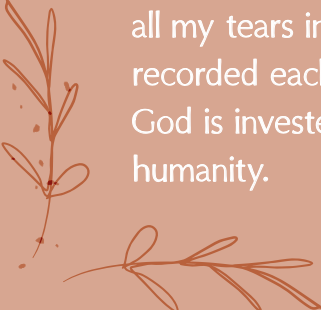
It's only when I acknowledge that my
experience is valid that I have the ability
to do something with my discomfort.

A simple line drawing of a Protea flower, showing the head and leaves, positioned in the lower left corner of the page.

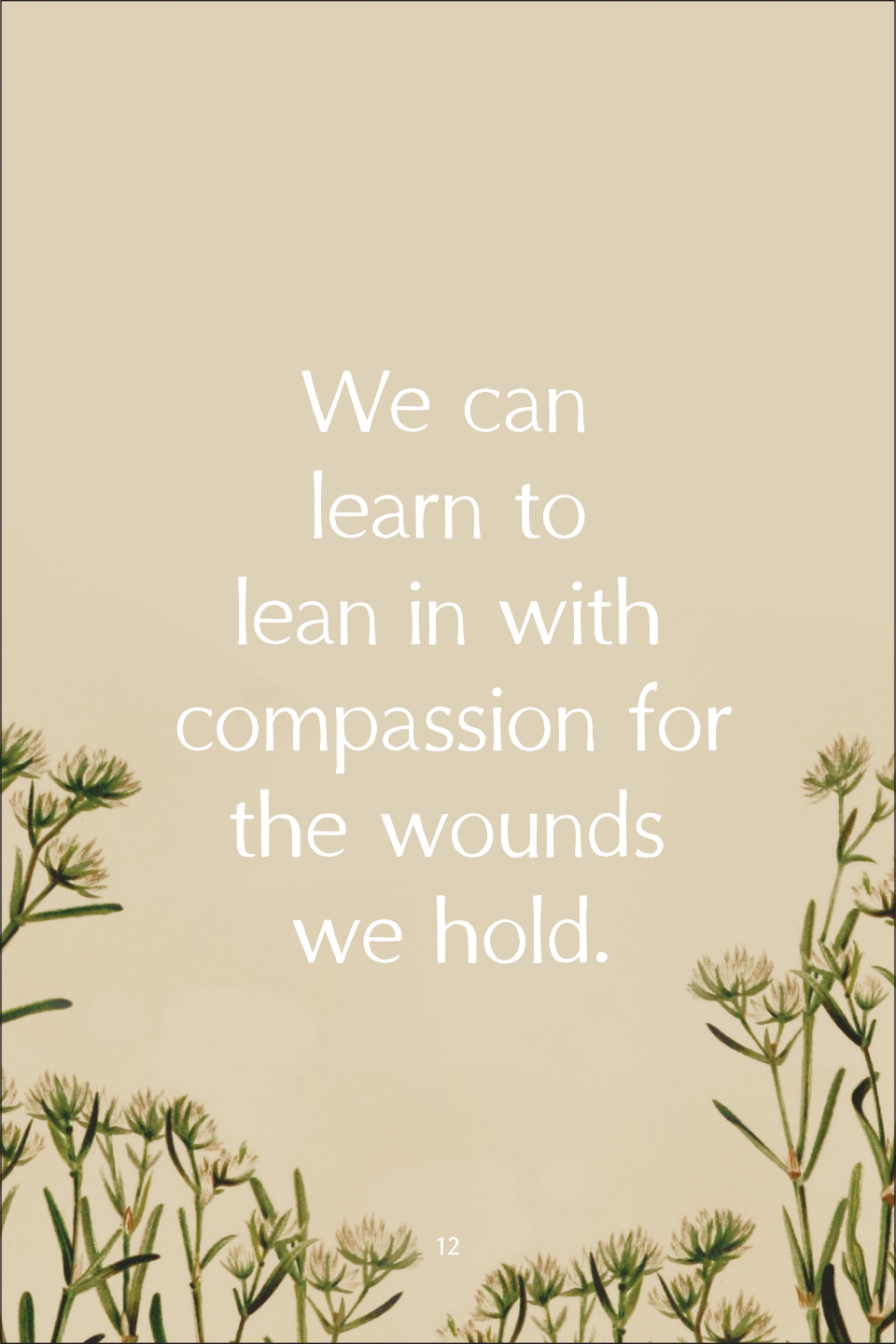
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Psalm 56:8 says, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book" (NLT). God is invested in the entire arc of our humanity.



When we deny the reality of our experiences, we don't become more of who God designed us to be, but less.



We can
learn to
lean in with
compassion for
the wounds
we hold.

Dear one, I'm sorry you've experienced events that required you to survive rather than live. I'm sorry you've often felt alone and unseen. I'm sorry you've had to be so strong. And I'm sorry that you've never felt safe to be gentle with the parts of yourself that have needed tenderness so badly.

God's posture
toward any
fragmented, hurting
parts of yourself is
one of compassion . . .



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. . . May you
embrace this
good news.

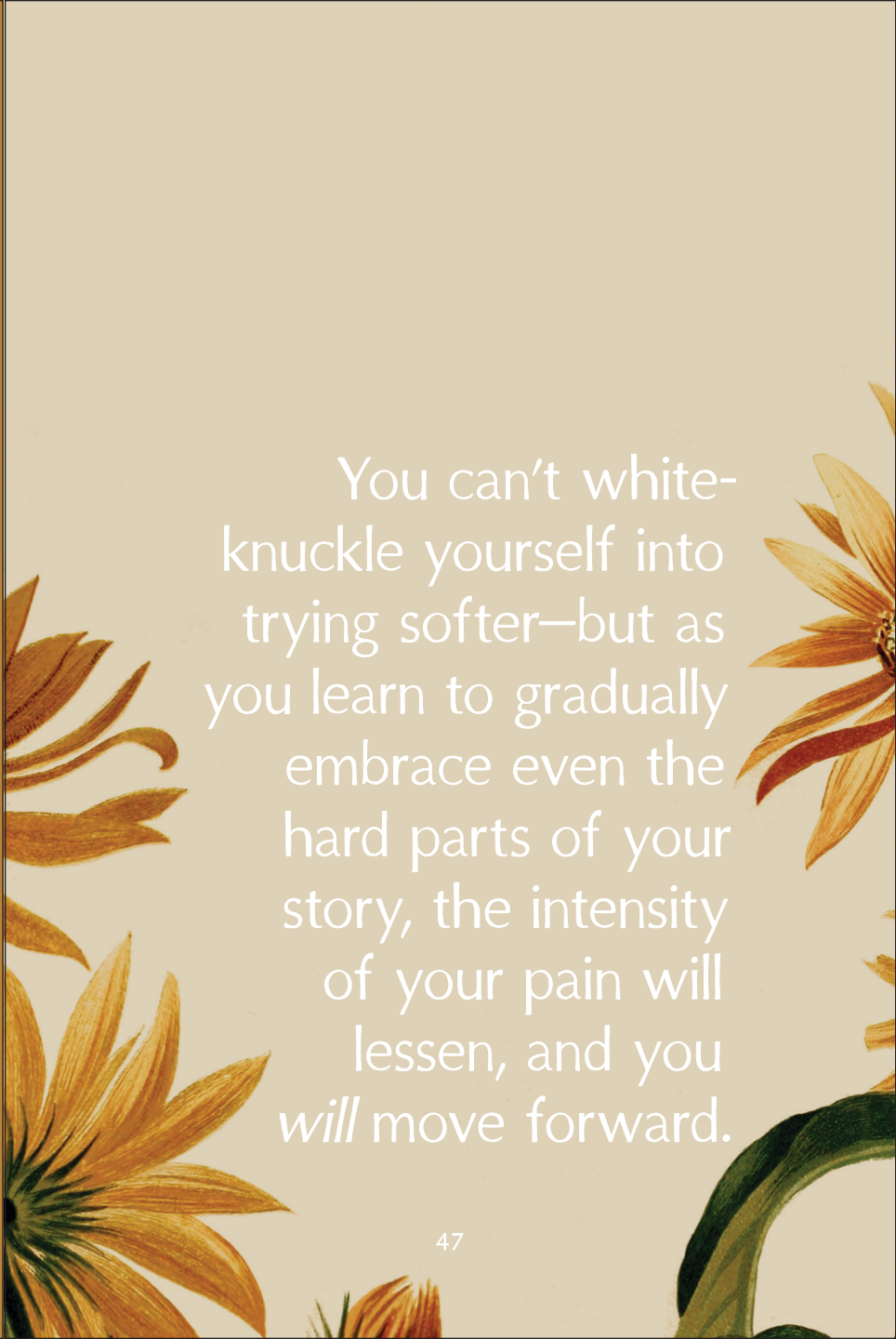


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TRY-SOFTER LANGUAGE

If it feels like a helpful resource, take a few moments today to sit with one of the following questions:

- What is the gentlest thing I could do today?
- What words or affirmations remind me of my true self?
- I wonder if I could take this in smaller steps?
- What would help me stay in my window of tolerance?
- What kind of support do I need to make this happen?
- Whom could I reach out to if I'm feeling overwhelmed?
- How could I help my body feel safe right now?
- What part of myself needs support right now?
- What activity would be soothing for me when I'm feeling triggered?
- Is there a way I could move my body to help me feel more connected to myself?

The right page features a light beige background with several large, stylized floral illustrations in shades of orange, yellow, and green. The flowers are positioned around the text, with some petals overlapping the words. The overall aesthetic is soft and natural.

You can't white-knuckle yourself into trying softer—but as you learn to gradually embrace even the hard parts of your story, the intensity of your pain will lessen, and you *will* move forward.